

americana

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Gremlin compared to the competition. See page 16.

The "only way to fly" on Whitefish Bay is by air-sled. Fishermen can move swiftly and easily from place to place, sometimes at speeds of 60 miles an hour and up.



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AIR SLEDDING FOR LAKE TROUT

By Larry Helin

You see them before you hear them—dark specks on the horizon silhouetted against the blue-gray vastness and the jagged white pressure ridges of three-foot-thick ice.

They are moving swiftly, close to 60 miles an hour, and when they're heading straight toward you across the barren expanse, the specks grow larger very slowly.

The wind shifts ever so slightly and for the first time you pick up the high whine of the engines. Streaks of sunlight glint off the yellow fuselages, flashing a cheerful signal, and in minutes the turbulent machines are bearing down on your little outpost, runners crunching the surface to smooth their path.

When you're ice fishing for lake trout a dozen miles from shore on Whitefish Bay in frigid, fertile Lake Superior—well, air-sledding is the only way to fly!

All of these fleet, functional machines are built by hand. And most of them have been designed by their owners with a specific task in mind.

They carry two men, plus all the tackle, bait, food and the provisions necessary for a day in pursuit of the wary lake trout. And there's not an air-sled "pilot" around who hasn't designed some extra space in the hull to bring home a few of the lunkers who roam the depths of Whitefish Bay.

The sleds weigh roughly 500 pounds and are powered by aircraft-type engines which range in horsepower from 65 to 150. They are pushed along on skates or runners by the backwash of an airplane propellor which requires a wide berth so that it won't shred the passengers like so many heads of cabbage.

You've seen pictures of the same type of powerplant pushing flat-bottomed boats through Florida's Everglades.

The same principle applies to ice fishing by air-sled. The Everglades are flat and fluid and the air-boats can skip over the shallow waters and tiny islands which form the thousands of square miles of that beautiful national park in southern Florida.

Your air-sled, too, can perform as well on land as on the icy vastness of the Great Lakes. The key to both types of fishing, of course, is mobility. That is, having an air-sled or air-boat small

enough to haul by trailer to a launching site, yet fast enough to allow you to cover several miles of fishing area in a short winter's day.

We've been using air-sleds in the north country for years, trailing them north from Detroit, across the Straits of Mackinac, by ferryboat at first, then later over the majestic Mackinac Bridge.

In the years before the snowmobile became so popular, it was commonplace to hunt predators—wolves, coyotes, foxes that roam the open ice in search of food—on air-sleds. The bounties paid by the Canadian and American conservation departments for predators made it a profitable and exciting way to hunt.

After the introduction of the snowmobile, however, the hunting pressure on the predators became too great. So it no longer is legal to hunt them from motorized vehicles. But the end of that era could not have been better timed.

Because in the last three years the lake trout, almost miraculously, have returned to Whitefish Bay!

The Lake Superior waters traditionally have been among the finest breeding grounds in the world for lake trout. The lake is deep—more than 1,300 feet at its lowest point—and because of its northern latitude it is extremely cold the year around.

In the last decade, however, the lake trout population was threatened with extinction because of uncontrolled commercial gill-netting and the deadly takeover of the parasitic lamprey eel.

Once these twin dangers were recognized, restrictions were placed on commercial netting. Control of the lamprey, however, was a little more difficult. And while chemicals for selective poisoning of the eels were perfected, the lake trout population fell to an all-time low.

Eventually the scientists figured out a way to combat and control the eel menace, however, and in recent years some 25 million new trout have been planted in Lake Superior. The bulk of them have grown to between four and 12 pounds and, well, you've never eaten anything more tasty.

Summer fishing pressure is increasing, naturally. But because Whitefish Bay is so far north of our

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most populated midwestern cities—and because so few fishermen know how to get around quickly and easily on the miles of ice—winters are for those who want some real fishing adventure.

We trail north through St. Ignace and Saulte Ste. Marie, Michigan, to Brimley on the western shore of Whitefish Bay. There are plenty of motel accommodations and fine eating spots open even in winter.

Standard equipment is plenty of warm clothing, a small propane burner (the air-sled also can double as a portable kitchen), a supply of food, an ice scoop, and a spud or auger for cutting through the frozen surface, which is between 30 and 40 inches thick by midwinter.

Bobbing for lake trout generally is restricted to one line, where all that is needed is a piece of wood grooved to hold about 300 feet of wire or dacron line plus monofilament leader. Jigs of various weights also are a necessity.

The charm of air-sledding for lake trout is that you can try several fishing spots in a short period of time. If you get shut out in one place, it's no trouble to move on to another.

We like to try to find a spot about 180 feet deep near a dropoff. Some of the more sophisticated anglers will drill a hole in the ice and drop in a battery-operated transducer, or fish locator, to give them a reading over a wide area below.

Since most of the best fishing is six to 12 miles from shore—and since that is a long, long way to walk on a cold winter's day—the air-sled is an invaluable asset.

We park it for a windbreak, then undercut a conical-shaped hole in the ice, scooping out the loose chips to keep the water as clear as possible.

Undercut holes are a necessity for several reasons. Landing a six-pound lake trout through the ice is a delicate task. You can't use a net, naturally, so you have to play him out by deft handling of the line, then pull him through the hole.

If you cut your hole straight down through the 30-inch ice, chances are you will knock the fish off the hook trying to thread him through the narrow opening.

But first things first. Let's catch him before you worry about landing him!

Half of the battle is properly baiting the jig. An old guide once said that the only thing a lake trout can't stand is to have a smelt look him straight in the eye. That, friends, was truly an understatement.

The best method of rigging a smelt head so that it looks lifelike is to run a single hook forward through the back of the cut bait, securing the barbs in its

nose. This allows the smelt's lower jaw to hang freely.

The jib attached below and worked slowly on or near the bottom gives a lifelike look to the lure.

That's the method we find most rewarding. But actually there are dozens of baits that have proven successful in the hunt for the wary lake trout. I've seen all sorts of jigs—some that looked like miniature model airplanes called piggyback lures—others that resembled a squid.

The rule, it appears, is to use whatever bait turns your trout on.

Don't get the idea, however, that all you have to do is spud a hole in the ice and drop in the line. Ice fishing for lake trout demands a definite skill.

Lake Superior's great depth hampers the delicate feel required to first find the bottom, then know for certain when you have a strike. When you are fishing in 180 feet of water it takes a long time for messages from the depths to be transmitted over all that line.

That's a major reason why wire or dacron line is advisable. The stretching effect of nylon leaves you with a feel like throwing a yo-yo on a rubber band.

Complicating matters is the fact that trout at that depth do not strike furiously. Instead they mouth the bait gently before deciding whether or not to tie on the feed bag. Once they bite, however, the angler must set the hook immediately and begin the swift hand-over-hand process of hauling the fish up from the depths.

The lake trout cannot be allowed to run and tire himself out. The trick is to get him to the surface on a taut line as quickly as possible, gaff him and get him on ice.

Rapidly changing water pressure from 180 feet to the surface helps to stun your prize. But good hands and quick thinking are of prime importance.

Restrictions? There are only a few. In the United States waters of Whitefish Bay you need a Michigan fishing license (resident or non-resident) plus a trout stamp. The limits are five lake trout per fisherman per day.

The rewards of air-sledding for trout?

Even if you don't catch anything, it's a fun way to spend a day in the wide-open spaces. □

LARRY HELIN is a noted outdoors photographer—writer and an accomplished hunter and fisherman.



Author Helin displays his catch. Lake trout range from four to 12 pounds.



Smelt baited on hook this way will look a lake trout straight in the eye.

By Steve K

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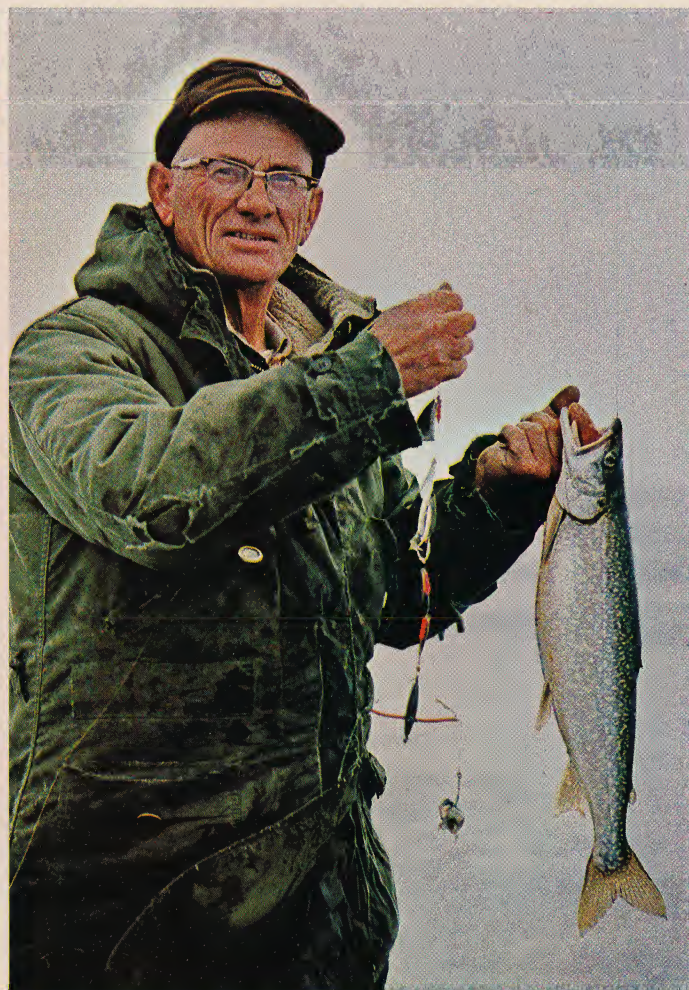
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Propellor-driven air-sleds are a versatile vehicle, suitable for travel over the ice or even for a fast run through the snowy woodlands.



Half the battle of landing a fat-bellied lunger like this one is properly spudding a conical hole in the ice.



All manner of jigs or lures are fair game when you're attempting to entice a wary lake trout. This one looks like a model airplane.



Cutting the corners wherever he could, Mark Donohue pushed his red, white and blue No. 6 Javelin to second place in the 1970 Trans-Am Sedan series of the Sports Car Club of America.

A Banner Year for 'Captain Nice' in AM Racing

By Pete Waldmeir

There is an adage in sports that you should never look back because somebody might be gaining on you.

But you can excuse American Motors' Javelin racing team if they pause briefly to reflect on their 1970 triumphs before they begin to look ahead to the exciting 1971 Trans-Am Sedan Championship series sponsored by the Sports Car Club of America.

There is no mistaking that 1970 was the year of the Javelin in Trans-Am racing.

The two-car team, prepared for competition by youthful, 33-year-old Roger Penske and driven by Mark Donohue and Peter Revson, literally stood the SCCA on its ear in the 11-race series.

Donohue, who took time out from the Trans-Am grind to win "Rookie of the Year" acclaim at the Indianapolis "500" over the Memorial Day weekend, won three out of four races in a tremendous stretch at mid-season.

Buoyed by those performances, plus three second and three third place finishes, the Javelin wound up second only to Parnelli Jones' factory-backed Mustang in the Trans-Am season point standings.

"Naturally, we would have really felt great if we had been able to win the title," explained the shy, blond Donohue, whose calm approach to the dangerous business of race-car driving has earned him the nickname "Captain Nice".

"But for a first-year effort in a brand new car I think we did exceptionally well."

That may be the understatement of 1970.

The Jones' Mustang got off to a flying start, winning the first four races

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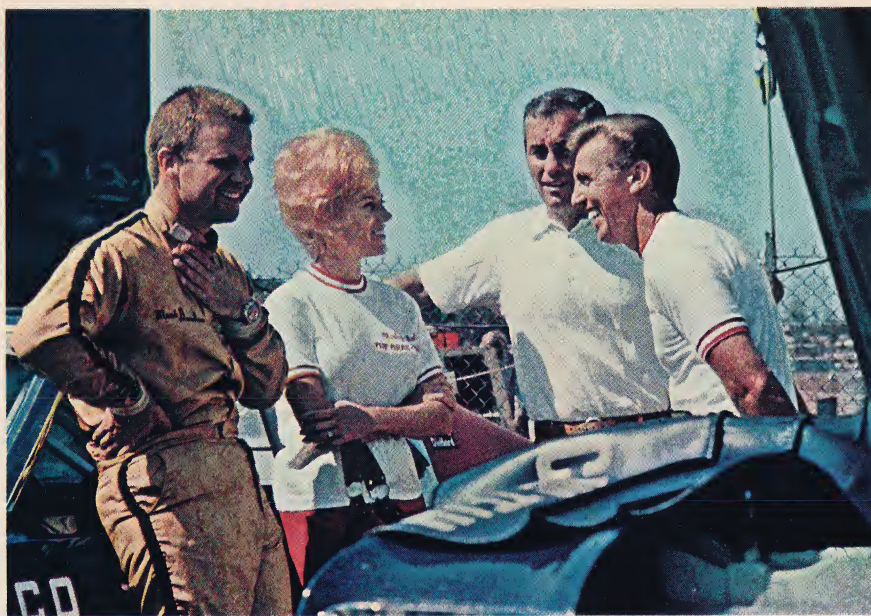
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East meets West as Team Javelin Driver Mark Donohue (left) and builder Roger Penske (center), who campaign in the Trans-Am Sedan series, chat with AM's "Drag-On Lady," Shirley Shahan and her husband, H. L., during practice for a race in Southern California.

on the card at Monterey, California, Lime Rock, Connecticut, Loudon, New Hampshire and Lexington, Ohio. Javelin picked up two seconds and a third place in those four races to stay close to the leaders.

Then, in the season's fifth race at Bridgehampton, New York, Donohue turned it all around. His fleet red, white and blue No. 6 Javelin won Bridgehampton, finished out of the money at Brainerd, Minnesota in a rainstorm, then took smashing back-to-back victories at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin and Le Circuit Mt. Tremblant, Quebec.

At that point the Trans-Am observers felt that Javelin just might pull the upset of the five-year series and edge out the Jones' Mustang. But a string of untimely mishaps in the final three races wiped out Javelin's chances. Donohue finished the season with a pair of seconds at Watkins Glen, New York, and Kent, Washington, and a third at Riverside, California to wrap up second place.

The final Trans-Am standings, however, were more than heartening for the factory-backed Javelin team. Mustang wound up with 78 points, Javelin 59, Camaro 42, Challenger 18 and Barracuda 15.

Camaro, which had won the Trans-Am title in both 1968 and 1969, took only a pair of first places in 1970 despite the fact that the factory team was run by famed sports car driver-builder Jim Hall.

"One major factor in our success," Penske explained, "was Javelin's reliability. We finished nine of the 11 races and, as you'll note, Mark Donohue was in the money (first, second or third) in all nine.

"Added to that is the fact that Peter Revson drove the No. 9 car—the backup to Mark's car—and placed second and sixth once and fifth twice. Those points helped a great deal in the team standings."

Actually, you had to look hard to find a major race track anywhere on the North American continent that didn't have a Javelin in competition in 1970.

While the Penske-Donohue Javelin was storming the bastions on the Trans-Am circuit, Jim Paschal and Warren Prout were wrapping up second place in both the driver standings and the manufacturers trophy competition in the Grand American Challenge series of the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racers.

The 43-year-old Paschal won 10 of the 35 races on NASCAR's "pony car" circuit and Max Baerrier picked up an 11th victory for Javelin filling in for the High Point, N.C., veteran.

The NASCAR Grand American series began in mid-February and ran through October 24. Of the 35 races, Paschal finished in the top five an amazing 21 times.

Finishing with a characteristic flourish, Paschal won five of his last eight races and wound up with 1,648 points, good for second place in the driver standings to Tiny Lund, who won 19 races in a Camaro.

In all, the Paschal Javelin, prepared by car-builder Prout, ran 10,170 miles in 35 races and won \$31,687 in prize money. Not a bad year.

Enthusiastic over the Penske-Donohue performance, American Motors is looking ahead anxiously to the beginning of the 1971 Trans-Am campaign. The SCCA still is formulating dates for the series, but it

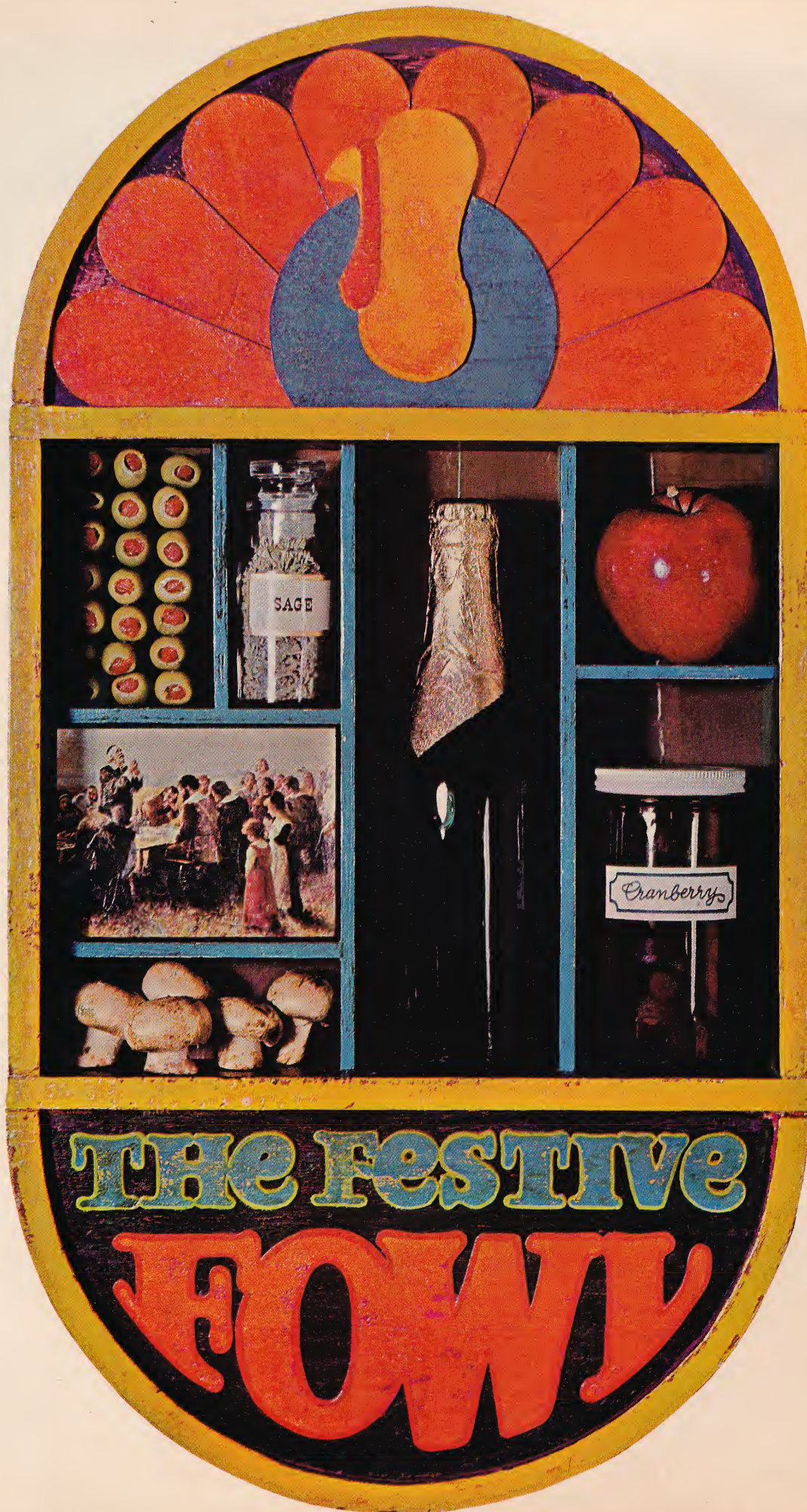
appeared at press time that there would be 13 to 15 races on the Trans-Am schedule, with the opener tentatively scheduled for March 28 at Talladega, Alabama.

In addition to the Trans-Am program, American Motors this year is expanding its incentives and contingency award money for drag racers who campaign AM products in National and American Hot Rod Association events.

\$1,000 in contingency money will be awarded for an Eliminator victory and \$750 for runnerup at National Events in the NHRA categories of Stock Eliminator, Super Stock Eliminator and Pro Stock Eliminator and the AHRA categories of GT I, GT II, GT III and Top Stock Eliminator.

Eliminator victories in a World Championship Series points meet in the above-mentioned NHRA categories will bring a \$500 award from AM.

The increased contingency money represents more than a 100 per cent raise over 1970. □



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By Dave Rank

In recent years, turkey has become as common in the market as ground beef—and come to think of it—frequently less expensive. The magic of deep freezing has made the big bird, once a seasonal treat, an everyday food.

Nonetheless, I, for one, think of turkey in terms of Thanksgiving, Christmas and holiday time in general. In my book, that's as it should be.

We know the name "turkey" was the result, years ago, of confusing the new American import with the guinea fowl (then called turkey), which had been introduced to England and misnamed long before *our turkey* made the scene. Just how anyone could confuse a guinea with a turkey is beyond me, but remember the gentry consumed monstrous quantities of port wine in those days. We can be thankful that they didn't mistake it for a stork, swan or peacock.

We know, too, that the golden brown roast turkey which holds center stage in painting the first Thanksgiving is a myth. The Pilgrim Fathers (or was it the Pilgrim Mothers) served up a kind of turkey stew to their Red Indian brethren. In all probability good judgment dictates that an old "he" turkey is better stuffed by a taxidermist than by a cook.

Since the late 1930's I've been involved in the cooking and eating of five to 15 turkeys a year. That's quite a few turkeys, but recalling an article in *The Saturday Evening Post* a dim memory ago, I fail to qualify as a true expert. It was about a Chinese chef in California—San Francisco, I believe. I quote from memory, "Cook one turkey, know nothing. Cook 50 turkeys, know nothing. Cook 300 turkeys, know a little. Cook 1,000—know how to cook a turkey." So be it.

But it remains that the vast majority of my efforts have been edible. I've roasted them, cooked them outdoors on the rotisserie and in the smoke oven—in a wide assortment of variations—stuffed and unstuffed. I've cut turkey breasts into neat boneless chunks and sauteed them in sweet butter with fine herbs. I've made *Turkey Nicoise* with artichoke hearts, button mushrooms, black olives and white wine.

Of course, a few of my roasters have been slightly raw the first time around, due, I suppose, to my inbred disinterest in meat thermometers. A few have been overcooked to the point of falling apart, which they did. I've dropped more than one with a liquid thud on the kitchen floor. And I sloshed a pint or more of hot turkey drippings on my child bride as she assisted in the always touchy transfer from oven pan to serving platter. She was wearing

a new black lace and velvet hostess gown. Just try to apologize for that!

Somehow all these birds were eaten. They ranged in weight from 8 to 36 pounds, but regardless of size or method of preparation, turkey is always special eating.

When I was a boy, of course, turkey was strictly holiday food. Mother cooked them in a blue-grey enamel roaster that would accommodate a 30-pounder without undue strain. I especially remember the buttered, brown butcher's paper that covered the breast and vulnerable areas of the wings and legs. Proper covering of these areas to achieve a uniform brown is very much a part of the mystique of roast turkey. The old-fashioned brown paper method appeals to me, but I doubt if many people use it these days. Aluminum foil is too convenient even if it is aesthetically lacking.

If you want the epitome of covering for a roasting turkey, try this: melt a half-pound of butter and add two or three tablespoons of freshly opened olive oil. Then soak a substantial pad of cheese cloth in the mixture until it is absolutely sodden. This you arrange several layers thick over all exposed surfaces of the fowl as it rests in the pan. Put it in the oven at whatever temperature you favor and forget it until it is time to brown.

Remove the cheese cloth and let nature take its course. You get continuous, effortless basting and an exceptionally moist and tender bird, provided you start with one that has the potential for moistness and tenderness. I once horrified the family by using a freshly opened polishing cloth obtained from a nearby gas station. It worked fine.

The stuffing can change the whole character of a turkey dinner, and there are certainly plenty of good stuffings to choose from. For some reason, I tend to think of them as *dressing*, a hangover from childhood perhaps.

The simple stale bread-based mixture, onion, celery and sage flavored, is a good and solid choice. Personally, I'm partial to oyster and chestnut dressings. There is no big mystery about either. Simply add whole raw oysters and their juices—or chunks of chestnut—to the basic bread mixture. At the Rank's, we find that Pepperidge Farm prepared stuffings are just about as good as any concocted at home, and a lot less trouble. Cubing stale bread is not exactly a thrilling or exacting culinary operation.

One spicy combination features pork sausage and mushrooms as accents. Fry bulk sausage and crumble it as it cooks, then mushrooms, before adding to the basic bread, onion and celery mixture. Cut down on other

seasonings. About a pound of sausage for a 15-pound bird does it. My cooking associate likes a solid, fine-grained moist stuffing, so she frequently adds a generous amount of matzo meal and extra butter. It comes out fine and delicious, with a Jewish flair.

Some additions worth consideration are pecans or even peanuts, especially if you use corn bread as a base. I've thought of cashews, but haven't tried them yet. I wouldn't hesitate to experiment with olives, stuffed or ripe—or capers—or mussels instead of oysters.

Spit-cooking a turkey has its points, but it is tricky with a big bird and I'm not fully convinced that the effort is worth the end product, or vice versa. But turkey cooked in a Chinese Smoke Oven—fired up with apple or cherry wood—that's something else.

While the oven is warming—and that takes time—I make an oriental marinade of imported soy sauce, sliced fresh ginger root, dry mustard, crushed garlic, honey and sherry. Spoon this mixture over the turk inside and out. It needs about an hour to properly soak in—and preferably longer. Then, properly trussed and dripping, the turkey is hung in the chimney of the oven.

Chinese ovens are built to keep the actual flames offset from the hanging food which cooks in the smoke from the aromatic wood. Maintaining the proper heat and quantity of smoke over the required four or five hours is a different problem and not one that I'd care to get into at this time.

The final product, however, is unbelievable until you have tried it and then it resists description. It's simply too good to talk or write about. I'll let the behavior of two young bachelor friends, rising stars in the advertising business a few years ago, bear witness. They plunked down on our patio late one Sunday afternoon, had a drink and expressed minor hunger. We had virtually a whole 15-pound turkey on hand that had been smoked the day before. It was served and they attacked.

Three-quarters of an hour later they were still gnawing miscellaneous bones. Then without warning they stood—wiped their greasy hands on their pants—said "Thanks" in unison and departed.

That was the only word spoken from the moment the smoked turkey made its appearance.

As a youth, I once dined with an unreasonably wealthy family. Their talented butler precarved the turkey with surgical precision. When presented at table, it had been returned to its original form and was held neatly together by a huge red satin ribbon, topped with a giant bow.

The host performed the tiring and delicate task of slicing through the ribbon with a razor-sharp knife, but didn't do too good a job of that. Unsupported, the bird collapsed into serving pieces.

I am reminded of certain luxury resorts where the locker room service includes untying your shoes and an assist in removing or donning your trousers.

Thanks, but I'll tie my own shoes, put on my own pants—and carve my turkey without an assist from the pantry!

All these are good memories, but I think now of a memorable turkey feast at a Cabana Club in Bermuda. It was plotted by an amazing young Swiss, schooled in the ways of the great Continental hotels, as a typical American Thanksgiving dinner. Somehow he got all the classic ingredients

to the table—plus a number of highly original additions—but taste and appearance-wise it bore not the faintest resemblance to a Thanksgiving dinner as I know one. It was excellent, however, in a way all its own.

I won't dwell on the additions to the traditional menu. However, there is general agreement that *Escargots Bourguignonne* and *Filet Wellington* are not found on many U.S. tables on that holiday.

But there was also a turkey, whipped potatoes, squash, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie.

The turkey was cooked in some unusual way and stuffed. Stuffed with a creamy rich mixture of *foie gras* and pureed maroons (chestnuts to you and me). Thin slices of jet-black truffles,

simmered in white port wine, had been inserted just under the skin in fanciful shapes and patterns.

It was a substantial turkey, presented with a flourish on a bed of fresh tarragon leaves, and surrounded with shimmering and shivering cubes of wine-flavored aspic.

At the very least, it was spectacular. And it tasted vaguely like turkey—which means good.

I know I'll be eating turkey, although not the Bermuda variety, several times between now and the New Year. Will you pull up a chair and join in? □

DAVE RANK is one of the nation's foremost amateur gourmets and a renowned author of articles dealing with the preparation and consumption of food.



Turkey Nicoise—My Way

A favorite of mine and most of my friends that makes use of the turkey parts that are available today in most markets. Cut a turkey breast into ½" cubes, free of skin and bone. Lightly flour the meat and saute gently in ½ stick of butter and three tablespoons of olive oil. Add salt and a teaspoon of fines herbs as it browns. Add a medium can of Italian plum tomatoes, button mushrooms, package of frozen artichoke hearts, and 20 pitted ripe olives. Cover and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes. Stir in ½ cup of white wine and bring to a boil. Ample for 4. Serve with saffron flavored rice.

Ginny's Tetrazzini

What to do with left-over turkey and gravy? Here's what! Make a sauce starting with packaged Durkee's White Sauce mix, adding an extra tablespoon of butter, ½ cup of Sherry, ½ cup of sliced mushrooms and a full cup of left-over giblet gravy. Add one cup each of white and dark meat cut into bite size pieces. Let the mixture simmer covered. Cook ½ lb. spaghetti or linguine until just tender. Drain and distribute in buttered baking dish. Pour on the turkey and sauce. Sprinkle heavily with grated Parmesan or Romano cheese and buttered breadcrumbs. Toast in 375° oven until crumbs are golden.

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BAJA RHYMES WITH HA-HA

By Bob Thomas

I have a "thing" about Baja California. You might call it a love affair. Anyway, it's a vintage romance which has been stumbling along rather one-sidedly for years. And, like most love affairs I know about, this one has its purely wretched moments.

Living in Southern California and Baja is like having a girl friend in another city. She's "only" 100 miles away. Just a beckon and you come running.

My latest reason for responding was not a matter of the heart. No, it was a matter of honor. Just once I wanted to complete the entire course for the now-famous Baja 500 off-road race which starts in Ensenada, a colorful Mexican town 65 miles south of the border.

For some, the race ends in Ensenada, too. Somehow, though, as a competitor I have never been able to finish a race I have started in Lower California. Baja (naturally, it rhymes with ha-ha) always gets the last laugh on me.

In fact, it's a miracle, I think, that any car finishes without some kind of trouble. That's why I just can't believe that Parnelli Jones, who has won both the Indianapolis 500 and the Baja 500 for an extraordinary "slam," has that rock-infested 550-mile route from Ensenada-to-Ensenada in an elapsed time of just under 12 hours. But he did. Just imagine a 12-hour auto accident.

My intentions on my latest adventure into Baja, however, were less crashing and more exploratory. No night driving, for example. Four days and see it all. Besides, it gets spooky out there after dark.

Even so, there is no such thing as a modest assault of Baja. Once you have penetrated 150 miles into the 1000-mile long Mexican peninsula, you have made a rather serious commitment. You cross only one time zone—when you set your watch back 100 years. It is the American southwest of the 1870's.

Our troupe included my wife, Claudia, who said this time she was going. Claudia is Baja's version of a Golf Widow. Then, there was Ralph Poole, one of the country's foremost automobile photographers and an experienced "Mexineer" (he



kept one of the vehicles running with a spray can of "Old Spice" aftershave lotion). And he brought his wife, Carlotta, and 15-year-old son, Wylie. Completing the troupe were Jim and Ann Hanyen. Jim four years earlier had gambled American Motors' *only* available West Coast public relations car on one of our Baja adventures. Discreetly, he saved the news for AM until afterwards. That car became a legend.

One of the vehicles was as inconspicuous as a desert snowstorm. It was a red, white and blue Hurst Jeepster.

Also, we drove a spanking-new Jeep Wagoneer, which—in my prejudiced mind—is the "super car" of Baja California. I say prejudiced because my affection for Baja has included a powerful feeling for Jeep's elegant four-wheel-drive station wagon, the Wagoneer, since a 1966 trip to Bahia de Los Angeles on the Gulf of California (*Americana*, July/Aug., 1967).

The Wagoneer is indestructible, yet comfortable. It has road clearance and the ease of an automatic transmission that kicks—oops—shifts smoothly from two-wheel drive to either low or high range four-wheel drive without the old-fashioned complications. To me, the Wagoneer is the only way to go in Baja.

Further, to combat 120-degree temperatures, this Wagoneer also had air conditioning (which we kept running without problem despite advice to the contrary).

Comforts or not, this trip produced the typical Baja hardships and the unexpected calamities.

The route of the Baja offers a perfect cross-section of the peninsula's terrain, none of it designed to entertain the timid. Its beauty is awesome, but so are some of its obstacles. At best, the sensation can be described as "miserable fun."

While Ensenada is the starting point, this fishing village grown into a tourist town is not the "jumping off" place for an adventure. That should be reserved for El Rosario. It is the last outpost, the threshold to Baja's wilderness, 150 miles south of Ensenada—60 of it by rutted and bumpy dirt road. Everything stops at El Rosario . . . the telephone line, the bus service and the traveler with trepidations.

Good and rare things begin to happen at El Rosario. Like Senora Espinosa's lobster omelet, watercress salad and huge, Sonora-type flour tortillas, either filled with refried beans, or lathered with apricot jam. The Senora's egg batter for the omelet is so light and delicate it is transparent.

After El Rosario, it's gasoline out of drums, five-gallon cans, maybe old Purex bottles and, if you're lucky, strained through a felt hat.

From El Rosario, we chose an alternate road to the third checkpoint, Santa Ynez, which is 86 difficult miles from El Rosario. We veered left and west of the normal Tijuana-La Paz road, hopefully avoiding some of the most rocky going.

If we hadn't taken this little-used route, we wouldn't have met Jose—Jose Arce, ageless but friendly caretaker of what we thought was the abandoned copper mine of Sauzalito. Jose, who spoke no English, told us we were the first passersby "por una semana, mas o menos" (for a week or so). The traffic through Sauzalito is not light. It is invisible. Jose's only request was for a cigarette. We failed him. So he settled for a cold beer instead in the 100-degree midday sun. If Jose had surprised us by his presence, we had not surprised him. He had heard us coming for at least a half hour, he said.

About 215 miles and 11 hours from Ensenada, we again cut off the "main

road" for a 10-mile side trip to El Marmol, a ghost town that looked as Mexican as old St. Louis. This once-booming onyx center had rows of empty frame houses, some with city-folk toilets . . . hardly typical abodes of Mexico. High-grade marble was hauled from El Marmol for a half century until operations ceased a dozen years ago.

We pitched an eerie camp. It was bordered by the quarry, the graveyard, the all-marble schoolhouse which still contains faded classroom work of its pupils, and a line of silent houses which provided a rare Baja commodity—firewood.

The following morning we pushed on to Santa Ynez and disappointment. This has been a busy stop in past races, a welcome place to make repairs, get food and sometimes a bed.

Well, we arrived at Santa Ynez hungry and low on gas. Despite the heat, our reception was icy. No gas. No food. No smile. Nada. It was an attitude quite uncommon to Baja. Hours later, we encountered the same situation to a lesser degree at Rancho Chapala, the midpoint of the journey where a year earlier we were greeted enthusiastically and served a venison lunch that remains a highlighted memory of Baja. We wondered aloud if perhaps the antics of 200 or more Americans, with their noisy buggies, cars and motorcycles twice a year, might be chipping away at the primitive tranquility.

Hungry or not, we dallied by going on a "baby Boojam" hunt. Claudia wanted to "smuggle" home a Boojam tree. And, if you don't hunt Boojams here, you don't hardly hunt 'em at all. The world's supply is concentrated in Baja between the 28th and 29th parallels, except for a small clump in Sonora across the Gulf of California—plus the one in my backyard, which I despise because it resisted capture. I cut my hand digging it up.

What's a Boojam? It's the Cirio cactus, a weird-looking unbranched trunk that pokes straight up out of the ground—sometimes to heights of 50 feet—narrowing to a point and a ridiculous plume of yellow flowers. Lewis Carroll (Alice in Wonderland) dubbed it the Boojam, a name it deserves.

By the second day Baja began to fight back. In the knee-deep silt of Laguna Chapala—with Rancho Chapala in sight—the Jeepster just stopped. There we sat in this large dry lake that is located smack in the middle of the peninsula between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of California.

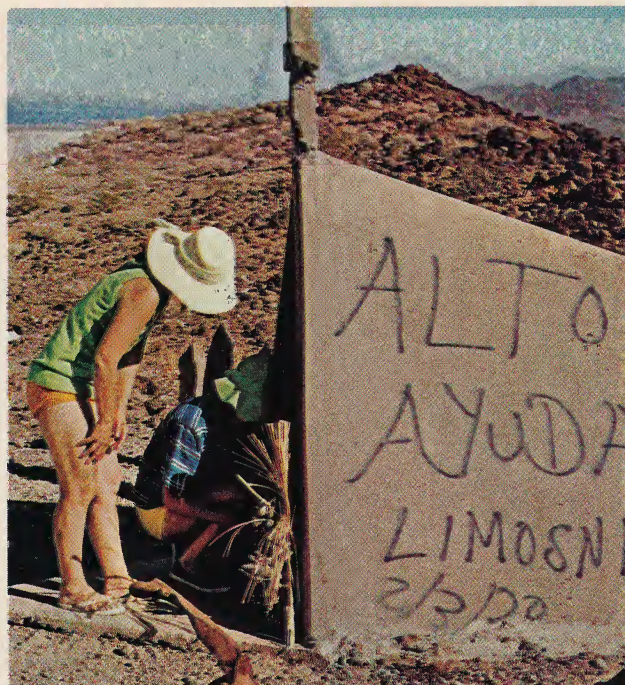
We'd had the feeling before, being stuck in the silt which is as fine as talcum powder and flows through your



The Valley of the Moon? Nope, just the Las Arrastras Trail, one of the better roads down the Baja Peninsula. Barren, n



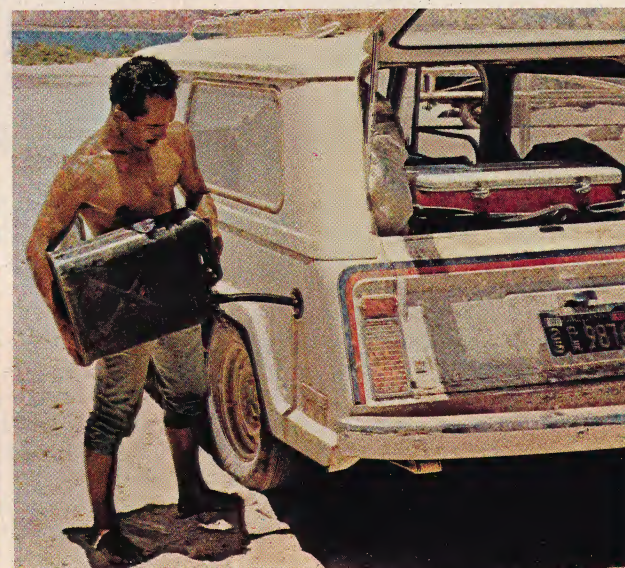
Down the Baja Peninsula. Barren, rocky terrain is as Mexican as refried beans and tortillas.



A-frame shrine sits atop famed Grade La Virgen.



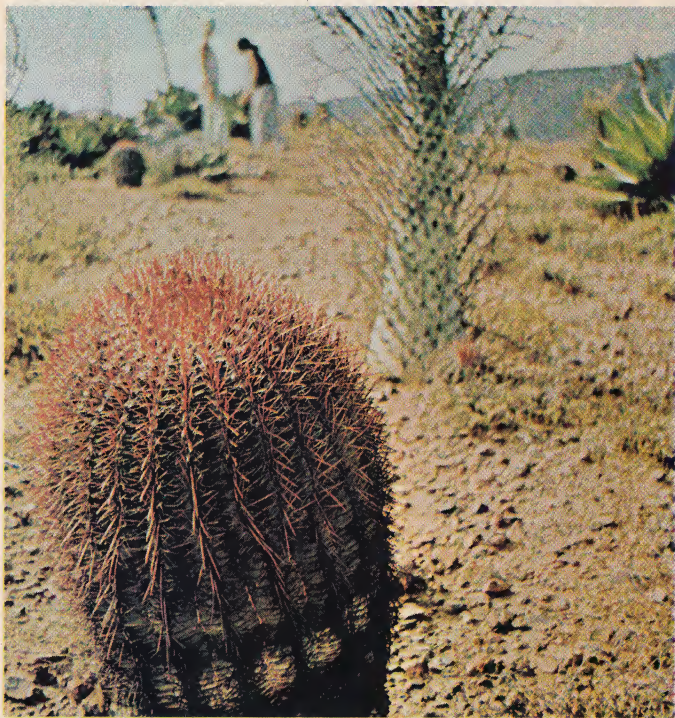
It's morning for Claudia Thomas in camp at El Marmol.



Baja's version of your friendly neighborhood filling station.



Low tide at San Felipe leaves fishing fleet stranded ashore.



Bannal cactus (front) and Boojam tree make Baja prickly paradise.



Carlotta Poole inspects copper ore at mine at Sauzalito.

fingers like water. Only this time, it didn't hang up the vehicle from underneath, it simply smothered it.

We probably should have covered the distributor. It got dust-clogged and ceased to work. Two hours of cleaning and coaxing under a broiling sun got nothing more than momentary results UNTIL Ralph gave the points a shot of aftershave lotion. The master mechanic mumbled something like "I thought the alcohol might clean it."

Whatever, the Jeepster started running again . . . albeit bucking and snorting on only four cylinders.

Fortunately, the Wagoneer was unperturbed by the dust.

Nevertheless, it was a time for decision. Should we follow the race's shortest route, through the narrow, rugged Las Arrastras canyon, or go the longer, easier and more traveled way south which cuts back up north through Calamajue? We chose Las Arrastras. What the hell? That's why we had come.

As we had heard, it was a one-way street, no turning back or passing through narrow, rocky gorges or on one-car-wide ledges. The robust-

running Wagoneer went first. The balky Jeepster followed, usually in compound low gear—to keep the revs high enough and the engine from dying at the low speed required to "walk" through the terrain.

It took one hour to cover one 6½-mile boulder-strewn stretch.

Painted on one giant rock was this sign: "You gotta be nuts." Yeah, so what's new?

About 15 miles from Gonzaga Bay we almost met disaster—a head-on collision with the first car we had seen in a day!

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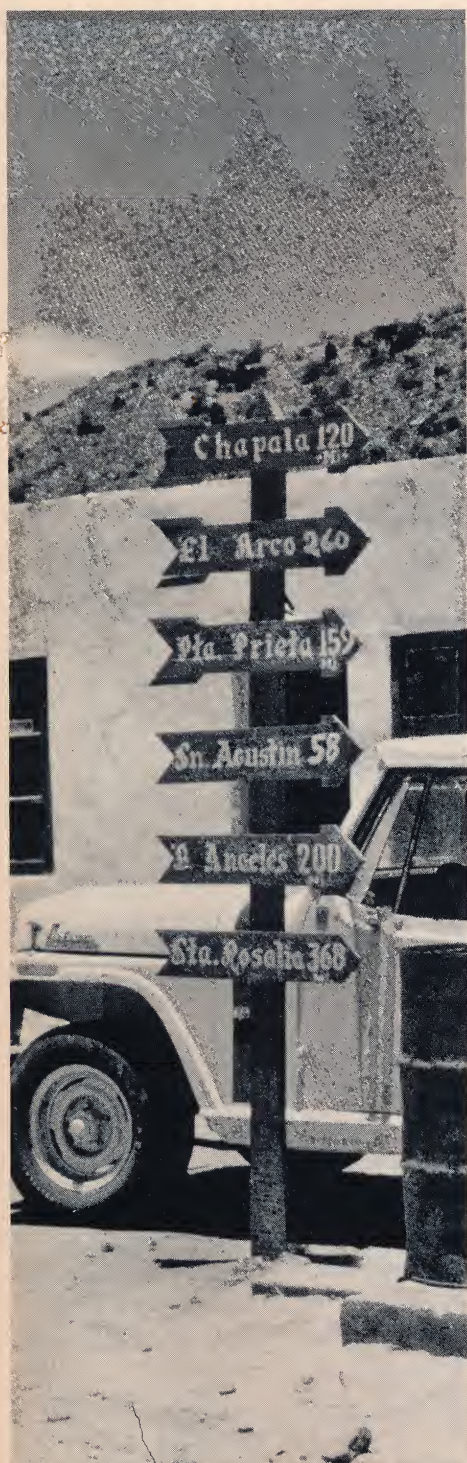
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Where to? It's all behind you from here.

I was driving the Wagoneer north down a sandy grade that was nothing more than two ruts, recalling that four years earlier I had been hopelessly stuck in the same grade going south in a Rambler Rebel. This time a pickup truck was barreling at us from the other direction.

I slowed, halfway climbing the ridge of sand on the right-hand side and expected the other driver to do the same. But he didn't. He kept coming at high speed, finally trying to climb the ridge of sand on his side without taking his foot off the gas. But he lost

control coming at us broadside.

By some miracle, we missed each other by inches. He ploughed off the road at an angle, stalled and stuck himself in the sand.

They had no water for themselves or the truck. We drained our ice chest and gave them two big containers of water, not realizing that later we would be doing the same thing for ourselves.

Gonzaga was spectacular, a twin bay of clear water that was warm but a soothing escape from air temperatures in the shade of 120. There was gasoline, good food at Alfonsina's, cold beer and a few cabins (all occupied). We slept on the beach. In the morning we talked to the pelicans, swam with the shy manta rays, watched as fish jumped out of the water all around us, collected shells (found one that housed a baby octopus), ate Mexican stew, learned that clams do walk and wondered why we had to ever leave.

Leave we did, bound for the next checkpoint, the fishing town of San Felipe nearly 100 miles north. To get there we first had to overcome the worst stretch of steep grades in Baja, starting at Okie's Landing about 20 miles from Gonzaga Bay and lasting for roughly 30 miles to Puertecitos, a popular fishing camp.

If the Jeepster had been feeling up to par, the trip from that point would have been a snap, the 40 percent grades a cakewalk.

But the abuse of bucking too hard and sometimes too fast (to keep the engine running), created some problems. On the first straight-up grade, the Jeepster slipped out of gear. I tried to shift it back into gear (super low) with one hand and still keep my right foot on the gas, my left foot on the brake, my other hand on the wheel and my eyes on the road.

It all happened in a nasty place, halfway up the grade. And on a curve. Well, the Jeepster made a mighty lurch toward the edge. Claudia bailed out. She was going to walk.

It was not a good day for walking so we ventured on. At the base of most grades we found nifty little inlets for swimming. At one of them we discovered a new problem. The connection at the base of the Jeepster's radiator was broken. We were losing water. Another coincidence. At this very same little beach in 1966 we had filled the Rebel's radiator with sea water to keep going.

This time we drained the ice chest into the radiator, leaving the cap loose to keep from forcing more water out of the crack under pressure. We made repeated stops to add water. Our water jugs and melting ice in the chest just did last to San Felipe, a place which promised repairs, a soft bed, hot food

and cold beer. All the things we needed. Some we didn't get.

Since we had arrived at midnight on a Saturday, we found nothing open and no available beds in town. So we slept on cots in the sand on the edge of the road, among the bushes, bugs and howling dogs.

We awoke on Sunday to discover it was election day. That meant no beer for the last leg of our journey back across the peninsula toward Ensenada, east to west. But we did find Ramon Rojas Diablo.

And for \$7 he fixed the Jeepster while we explored the San Felipe shrimp fleet which was on "dry" land, the result of those famous 20-ft. Gulf tides.

To cross the peninsula directly from San Felipe to Ensenada is a most uncommon thing to do, unless you're racing. It's 150 miles of contrasting terrain, unlike what we had seen over the past 400 miles.

After the thrill of a mile or two of blacktop from San Felipe, we took a sandy turnoff, and headed toward the 10,000-ft. high San Pedro Martir Mountains which split the peninsula. At the base of the range, the race routes for 12 miles over hard-packed Diablo Dry Lake. You travel at whatever speed you dare go.

After a rain, you don't go at all. It's a quagmire and impassable.

Then, we climbed into the high, central ground of upper Baja through the Santa Matias Pass. More surprises. We discovered cattle ranches, the fertile Valle de la Trinidad (the final checkpoint before Ensenada) with its groves of almond, peach and pear trees, and still another valley, Ojos Negros.

Part of that last leg carried some of us through familiar ground, the high meadows of another mountain range, the Sierra Jaurez, where this time we dodged showers and thunderbolts. Seven years earlier Jim Hanyen and I were snowbound in the same area. Snowbound in desolate Baja, California? Honest.

It was dusk when we pulled into Ensenada, right on schedule. In four days, we had seen what was only a blur to Parnelli Jones.

In 12 hours, he hardly had time to set his watch back 100 years. □

Photos by Ralph Poole

BOB THOMAS is a well-known national automotive writer and veteran of many trips down the Baja Peninsula.

Gremlin Scores High in AM's Mini-Car Critique

By Dan Fisher



Dealers and salesmen give Gremlin and its competitors the once-over during comparison tests at Ontario, California.

The first thing you find out when you mix about 150 new car salesmen, six minicars, and the newest, most elegant automobile race track in the country is that nearly everyone has a little bit of Mark Donohue in him.

If you're fortunate enough to get by that obstacle without producing an instant junkyard, there are other possibilities.

If the salesmen work in 55 Los Angeles area American Motors dealerships, for example, and the six cars include AM's Gremlin, Ford's Pinto, Chevrolet's Vega, and the three top-selling imports, you've got the makings of a minicar Gallup poll, albeit a slightly prejudiced one.

That's exactly what AM had in mind when it hosted men from the firing

line at nearby Ontario Motor Speedway, site of the recent California 500 championship car race, for "Comparison Day." The theory: If you expect your salesmen to effectively sell minicars in the midst of unprecedented competition, they had better know the pros and cons of all the entries—including your own.

In two days and four separate on-track sessions over Ontario's 3.2-mile road-racing course, that's what they discovered.

The course, which racetrack owners hope will host a United States Grand Prix event next year, provides a good test of braking, handling and acceleration. It includes 20 right- and left-hand turns, plus two straightaways

By Dave

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Lineup of cars heads for the showdown on the race track.



Gremlin was cornering champ.



Javelin is at home at head of pack.

in which unlimited sports cars can hit 175 miles an hour or more.

The biggest problem during "Comparison Day" was persuading attendees not to shoot for the track record while driving Volkswagens, Toyotas, Datsuns, and the three domestic minis.

"I fear for the lives of the cars and of the drivers," sighed Bob Stephenson, AM's Los Angeles zone manager. "These guys are normally very stable individuals, but they're like Walter Mitty out there."

During the first day, one salesman tried to pass everything in sight. After two warnings, he pulled out his wallet and produced a California Sports Car Club competition license. After that, "we didn't fuss at him as much."

But one change was made. Don Tanker, business management manager for the zone, was assigned to lead the group around the course—slowly—in a 1971 Javelin "pace car."

Unfortunately, Tanker was no more immune to the race driving bug than his charges. Every lap he took, he got faster. "He's trying to break Donohue's lap times out there," Stephenson moaned.

Finally, Tanker got black flagged.

At a later session, I appreciated the problem even more. I hopped into my car and joined the parade to ferry a photographer around the track for some "action" shots. My passenger balanced on one knee in the front seat and leaned out the open window so he could snap the cars both fore and aft.

Trying to stay within camera range of the drivers in front, I alternated between propping the photographer up in right-hand turns and pulling him back into the car on left-handers as we squealed around the course in hot pursuit.

Miraculously, the test rides ended without any fender bending and attendees left the sunbaked track for the air-conditioned comfort of the speedway's Victory Circle Club and the meat of the meeting—a feature by feature critique of each of the six cars.

Some of the criticism was facetious. One salesman complained that he didn't like the Vega "because I dropped my pen when I got out."

But most criticism was pointed—even when directed at Gremlin. In fact, participants were encouraged to take verbal potshots at the AM entry as well as the competition. "If you spotted a negative feature, your customers probably will too, so we'd better talk about it," Bill Benson, AM's zone

sales promotion manager said. "We can't be all things to all people."

On the plus side, salesmen praised the Gremlin's 6-cylinder proven engine as the most powerful among cars tested. Quality control is good, and several suggested that Gremlin's interior is superior to Pinto's and Vega's.

In conclusion, most agreed, any test involving just one car from each producer cannot be complete. And only time will tell how the cars rank on such features as durability, quality and serviceability.

But "Comparison Day" did give AM salesman a leg up on their competition in a market characterized by sophisticated shoppers, company officials feel. "I think what you learned out there might make the difference between making a sale and not making it," Benson told attendees.

Al Larose, a suburban Glendale, California salesman, thinks Benson was right. He was one of the zone's top

ten salesmen already, but now feels he's an even better—and more confident—one.

"When you get to drive all of the cars, you get your chance to make comparisons of handling, braking, acceleration, roominess and everything the customer wants to know," Larose said. "Since the Ontario affair, I've sold cars to a couple of people who were pretty tough—people I might not have sold otherwise. I finally told them to go out and test the other cars to see if I wasn't telling them the truth. They did, and it worked because they were better informed and more confident they were making a wise purchase." □

DAN FISHER is automotive editor of THE LOS ANGELES TIMES.

IT'S A DATE! TUNE IN ON JANUARY 10

for one of the year's great TV Specials—
brought to you
by your American Motors Dealer



Some of the biggest names in show business plus a star studded lineup of pro football greats join forces in a colorful hour on CBS—8 to 9 P.M., Eastern Standard Time.

This fun-filled salute to the game hits right between the final National Football League playoffs and the Super Bowl. But it is far more than the usual sports show. This is comedy and entertainment for the whole family as well as the sport fans. You'll see film stars John Wayne, Jack Lemmon, Charlton Heston—with Miss Lucille Ball and Arte Johnson adding their own very special brand of comedy. There will be blackouts, sketches, great musical numbers, and a chance to enjoy some of the most popular people in America (including top pro football stars) in new and different roles.

Football fun is the name of the game on CBS, January 10 at 8 P.M. Eastern Time. Tune in for this great TV Special, brought to you as another service by your American Motors Dealer.



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TipS for the Winter Wayfarer

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No one can guarantee trouble-free winter driving. The elements refuse to cooperate.

However, simple and relatively inexpensive precautions in preparing your car for the cold weather can do much to lengthen the odds in favor of the motorist.

As a first step in winterizing a car, the wise motorist has his antifreeze level checked to make sure the radiator fluid will withstand subzero temperatures. Then you should make sure your car is where it should be in its routine maintenance schedule. A check of your owner's manual tells the recommended lubrication level.

Under any circumstances, it's not a bad idea to change engine oil and oil filter. Usually a good multigrade 10-W-30 weight oil is sufficient for most climates. However, American Motors' service departments, or service stations in any part of the country have an approved recommendation on oils for that particular area, as explained in the owner's manual.

The vast majority of the millions of road service calls that are made every winter are due to electrical failures usually associated with a rundown battery. That's not only because of the weather itself. A car battery works a lot harder in winter than it does in summer. Days are shorter and headlights are used more frequently. In addition, the heater, windshield wipers and defrosters are used routinely in inclement weather and all work off of the battery.

Check your battery. This is a simple job at any service department, garage or service station. Be sure to start the winter season with a good battery and make sure the battery terminals are clean to insure maximum efficiency.

At the same time, have your points, plugs and alternator checked as a part of your general engine tune-up. They all are a part of the electrical system and, therefore, crucial in winter. Make sure that the timing of your engine is checked at this time. Any good mechanic should include this in the tune-up.

In some areas of the country where extreme cold prevails in winter, an engine block heater of some sort is worth considering. These devices, which usually plug into an electrical outlet in your garage, keep the engine oil or coolant warm and allow you to fire the engine in the morning without grinding the starter and draining the battery. If you keep your car outside, you can hang a blanket or tarp over the radiator at night to keep the cold air from the engine compartment. That's not terribly effective, but every little bit helps.

Good tires are vital to safe, trouble-free winter driving. Inspect your tires and make sure they have adequate tread. Snow tires are highly recommended in areas of heavy snowfall. Standard snow tires are built to provide traction through heavy snow. If your driving takes you over icy, hard-packed roads, tire engineers recommend studded tires. Tire chains offer another alternative to improve traction.

There is a way to save money on the purchase of snow tires. If your spare is new, trade the spare in on a snow tire and have it mounted on the wheel that came with the spare. Then, you only have to buy one snow tire and one wheel to have a set. In normal weather, you can use one of the snow tires as a spare.

Preparing your car for winter can save headaches, unnecessary expenses and delays. However, it's only part of the story. Driving techniques on snow and ice require particular care. A few simple rules, if followed, can prevent frustrating delays and expensive accidents.

- Avoid rapid acceleration on snow or ice. This merely spins the rear wheels and increases the chance of getting stuck.

- Pull away from curbs or driveways with front wheels pointed as straight as possible. By cutting your front wheels, you increase rolling resistance and cause rear wheels to spin.

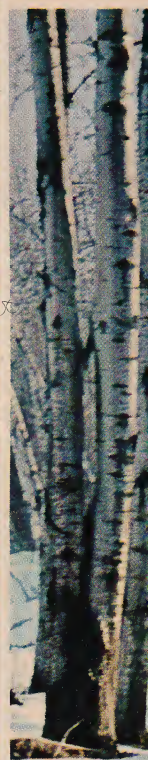
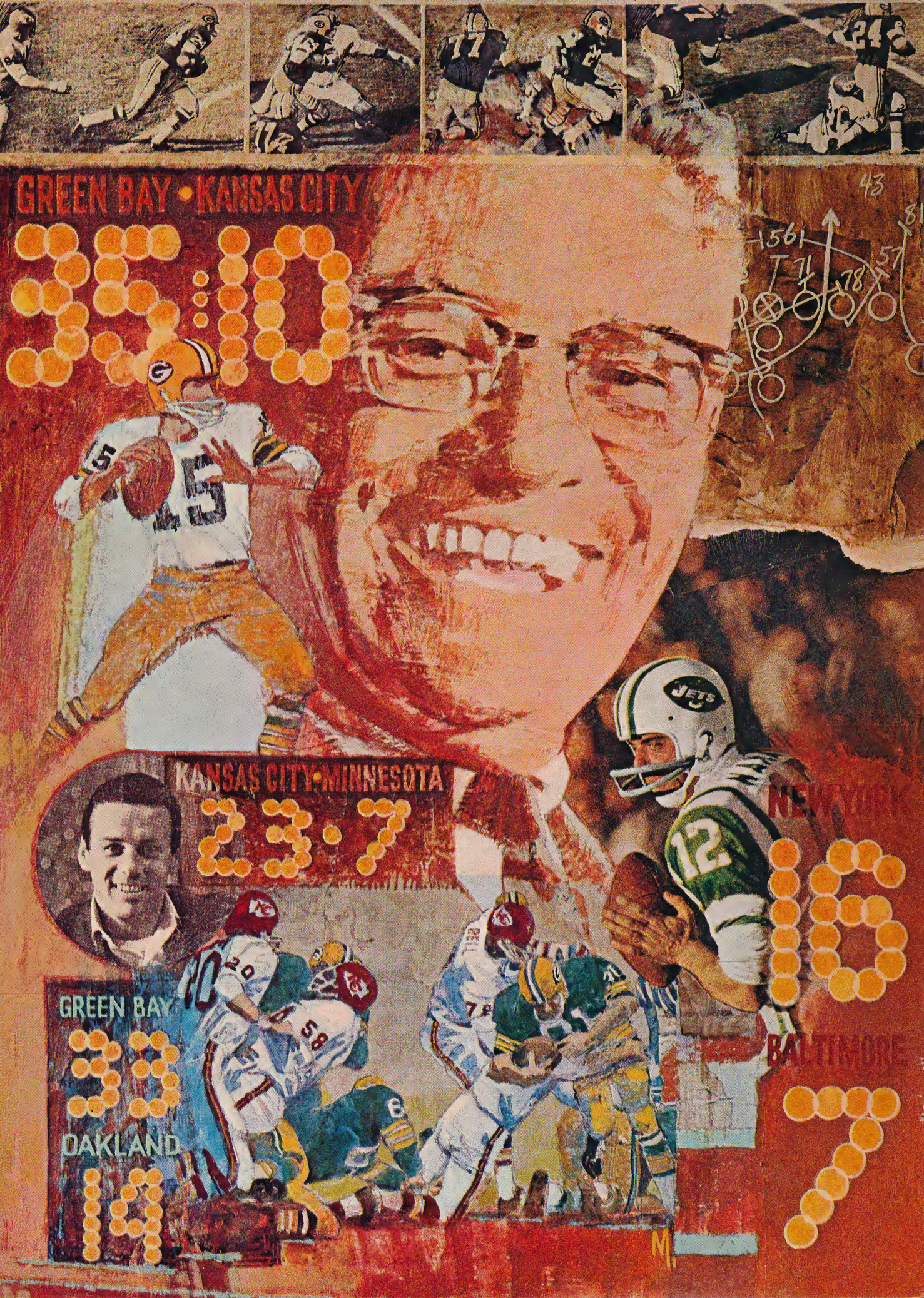
- Avoid jamming on your brakes to stop. This causes wheel lockup and usually results in loss of control and a skid. If you have to stop quickly on slippery pavement, pump your brakes so you retain steering control.

- Avoid abrupt changes of direction. Jerky movement of the steering wheel can induce a skid.

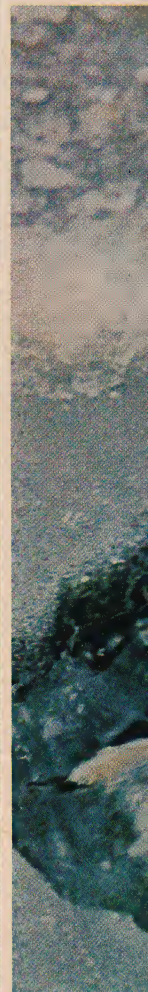
- Avoid pulling onto the shoulder of the road, if possible. If it is necessary, do so with care. Snowplows often cover gullies, culverts and large obstacles that can damage your car.

Finally, be even more of a defensive driver in winter. If you have gone to the trouble of equipping your car with studded tires or chains and the guy behind you hasn't, you could pay for his indifference. You might be able to stop in a shorter distance than he can, so glance in your rearview mirror in emergency situations.

A little extra care and concentration goes a long way to make winter driving a lot safer. Stretch the odds in your favor as much as you can. □



Propellor-



Half the properly s

SUPERBOWL TO LOMBARDI CUP

A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

By Steve Weller

Nobody knows the exact moment when the men who ran the National and American Football Leagues decided harmony was the better part of bankruptcy.

It might have happened when they looked at their payrolls in the cold and costly winter of 1965 and found they were spending more money on kidnappers and baby-sitters than they were on coaches and talent scouts.

It could have been when they discovered that several of their quarterbacks had better credit ratings than they did.

Or perhaps the dawn broke when they noticed that, even with the best of cloaks and keenest of daggers, they still were at the mercy of a college boy's whims.

How discouraging it must have been for the Baltimore Colts to give a linebacker from Pittsburgh named Marty Schottenheimer their most lavish pitch, and lose him because the Buffalo Bills promised a rear window defogger for his car.

Whatever the time it was made, the decision to trade pride for peace brought big profits and a post-season showpiece called, with no great flair but instant acceptance, the Super Bowl.

Technically, completion of the merger and creation this season of two 13-team conferences under the single banner of the National Football League should kill the game's original label.

Changing the name of the trophy and awarding the winner the "Lombardi Cup," in honor of the man who dominated the first two NFL-AFL confrontations, also could affect the event's official designation.

No matter what the by-laws proclaim, now or in the future, much of the press and public will always consider professional football's championship play-off the Super Bowl.

The game and its handle have survived the grisly sight of empty seats

in Los Angeles, and lived through the sorehead court actions of southern California television viewers who didn't think they should have to watch Marjorie Main when Bart Starr and a dozen color cameras were just down the street in the Coliseum.

It weathered the frozen fountains inflicted by a cold snap that New Orleans promoters insisted was unseasonable, and the stupors induced in the same city by Eggs Benedict that were extremely seasonable.

It was tempered by the wounding of Len Dawson in a scattershot gambling probe story that broke just six days before the Kansas City quarterback was to lead the Chiefs against the Minnesota Vikings.

Most of all it thrived on the impertinence of Joe Namath, the New York Jet quarterback who left a trail of tweaked egos from Pompano Beach to Key Largo, then followed them back to his hotel room just in time to get a couple of hours' sleep before going out to prove that all football teams are created equal, only some are more equal than others.

Before Namath and the Jets beat the Baltimore Colts in the third Super Bowl, AFL partisans were loud in their claims to parity with their older rivals. But you had to wonder if Lamar Hunt, Hank Stram and Weeb Ewbank didn't pull the covers over their heads at night and apologize to the ghosts of the Providence Steamrollers for their impudence.

Namath was not the first of the great AFL orators.

Fred Williamson, a Kansas City cornerback, combined all the best vocal features of the late Gorgeous George and an early Gramophone, as he littered the California coast with tales of the fearful things he would do to the Green Bay Packers in the first Super Bowl in January of 1967.

Williamson talked at length about the receivers he tackled with a fist he called "The Hammer." But never

mentioned the ones he didn't tackle at all.

Williamson was carried off the field, stone-cold unconscious, in the fourth period.

When that first game was over, Green Bay coach Vince Lombardi was asked why it took his team so long to dispose of the gabby defensive back.

"Williamson," said Lombardi, "didn't hit anybody until the last quarter."

Lombardi, who died of cancer in August, did one of his finest coaching jobs that week in Santa Barbara. He kept most of his players from admitting they laughed while watching Kansas City movies, and it wasn't until after the 35-10 victory was secure that he allowed himself to rate the Chiefs somewhere in the middle of the National League standings, a respectable neighborhood to his way of thinking, but an analysis that was to rankle Kansas City fans for four years.

Seeking an American League site, not to mention a stadium that was not too fat and funny-shaped to fill, the second Super Bowl was moved to Miami and again Lombardi was the dominant personality.

It was there that rumors of his retirement came to full bloom.

Oakland, the American League representative, never had a chance. Without the forensic forearm of Fred Williamson the AFL lost every point for pre-game chatter.

On the field not even Knute Rockne could have countered the Packers' dread of sending their demanding tutor out of football with anything less than a decisive victory. Green Bay won, 33-14, and Lombardi did retire, if only for a year.

The Super Bowl returned to Miami the following winter but Lombardi and the Packers did not. In a way, it was a shame. It would have been interesting to see if they could have handled the verbal footwork of Joe Namath.

Don Maynard, the New York receiver who grew sideburns about the time Grover Cleveland was cultivating his, got the AFL off to a shaky start by charging that Jet management was too tight to buy its employees shoes or a football pump or something.

After that it was all Namath. In lieu of rotting away in bed at night the brassy passer slept through the Jets' first practice, a picture-taking session.

Early in the week he ran into Baltimore kicker Lou Michaels in a restaurant and informed him that the Colts did not have a chance.

Michaels retorted that Namath's chances of being punched in the nose were excellent, but he soon repented.

"He wasn't as bad a guy as I thought," Michaels said. "He picked up the check."

Greater love hath no loudmouth, but by game time Michaels would have had a hard time finding a teammate who didn't want to pick up Namath, preferably by the lower lip, and drop him off an Orange Bowl light tower.

If Namath's nonstop chest thumping was designed to take the Colts' minds off their work and drive them into a frantic effort to flatten him, he did a masterful job.

Baltimore never got started, the Jets won 16-7, and the legend of NFL superiority went up in a flurry of Namath's passes and Matt Snell's off-tackle romps.

Well, not quite all the way up.

The theory that Baltimore had ignored the Jets and played Namath's mouth was widely held in National League councils. The theory never saw its second birthday. It perished last January 11 in the fourth, and supposedly final, Super Bowl.

The game was played in New Orleans, a move that enabled 80,562 viewers to pay \$15 a ticket to see the game and almost that many tourists to get the gout.

Rum breakfasts at Brennan's staved off snow mold but led to other hazards. According to a peachable source the man who thought up the idea of pre-game balloon ascents had been inspired by a spiked banana.

In another master stroke the AFL balloon crew shrewdly botched its assignment and never got off the ground. The NFL pilot, burdened by a horned Viking helmet that wouldn't fly either, got up enough altitude to smash into a covey of hoopskirted belles, a feat that could have taken a LeMans-sized casualty toll but didn't.

Despite this omen the NFL champion Minnesota Vikings were favored to beat Kansas City.

Williamson was long gone and the Chiefs had neglected to draft a pop-off

to replace him, so there would be no Namath-style diversions.

Dawson, the Chiefs' quarterback, was under an uncalled-for but debilitating cloud, having had his name dropped in the middle of a gambling investigation report.

And besides, Kansas City was suspected of fainting at implausible and embarrassing times.

When it was all over, thousands had swooned but all were swathed in Minnesota pennants. Kansas City won, 23-7, and the Super Bowl as originally constituted was history.

The game goes back to Miami this January where players, coaches, press and public can meditate in warm salt air.

Professional football is all one big, happy family now and the bitter rivalry that characterized the first four Super Bowls will never be recaptured.

Heh-heh. □



STEVE WELLER is sports columnist for the BUFFALO EVENING NEWS and has covered all four pro football Super Bowl championship games.

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By Larry

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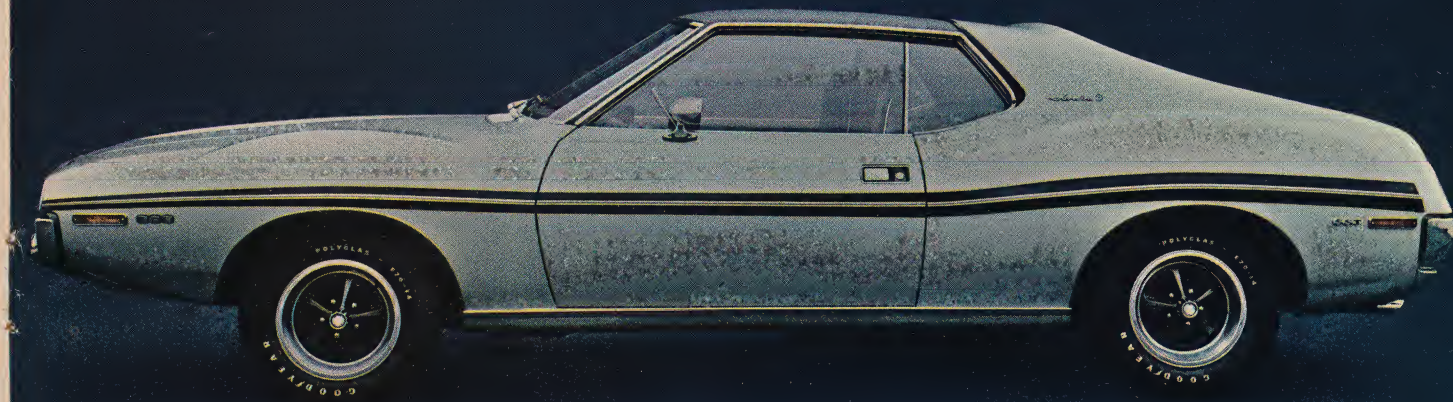
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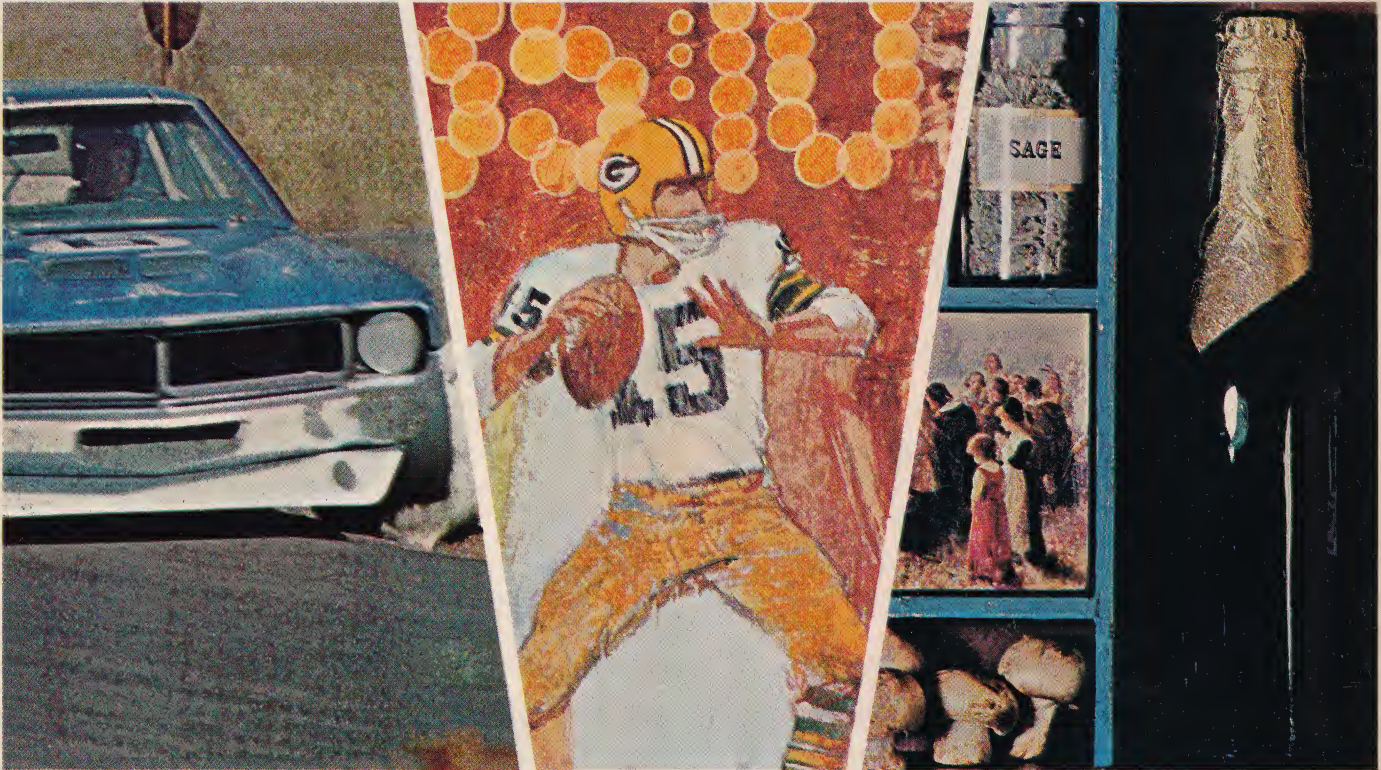


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